



## HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

---

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

# Testimony :: His Excellency Solomon Passy

Foreign Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria - Chairman -in-Office, OSCE

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Members of the US Congress and the Helsinki Commission,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor and privilege for me to speak before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Indeed, I am delighted to see the initials CSCE still in use. They meant a great deal to me and others of my generation as we struggled for the implementation of the Helsinki values in our country back in the 1970s and 1980s.

Your long-standing and persistent work of monitoring the implementation of the basic principles and values of the Helsinki process since its inception 30 years ago is widely recognized and appreciated.

In some ways, this is a daunting audience – I will rarely have an opportunity to address a body which is so well-informed about the OSCE. But on the other hand, the realization that this Commission shares my passion for this unique Organization – as well as my determination to build on its considerable achievements – is a wonderful encouragement.

It is a pleasure to see again my friend Chris Smith and others whom I saw just last week at the meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna. I salute the role played by the Assembly in our work, especially in monitoring and observing elections.

I sometimes hear people speculate about whether the OSCE is still needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. NATO and the EU are enlarging. There is a NATO-Russia Council.

So who needs the OSCE?

But let us pause to consider just how much the OSCE has achieved in its short life – when I say short, I remind you that we will celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the OSCE in December this year. The Organization is exactly the same age as my youngest son. It is barely out of its infancy. And yet we have much to be proud of.

During the past decade, the OSCE has helped to end civil war in Tajikistan and constrained

conflict in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova and Georgia. It played a major role in building civil society in post-conflict Bosnia and Kosovo and continues to do so.

Today, the relevance of our unique comprehensive approach to security – stressing human rights and economic development as well as political-military issues – is undiminished.

The OSCE is the only European security forum that includes the United States, Canada and all the countries of the former Soviet Union as full and equal members. Our 18 field missions, especially in countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, represent an unrivalled on-the-ground presence which can help us all deal more effectively with new threats to security, not the least of which is terrorism. I will have more to say about this later.

Bulgaria has taken on the OSCE Chairmanship at a significant period in international relations. Both the EU and NATO are welcoming new members this year. Out of 55 OSCE participating States, 26 will soon be members of NATO and 27 will belong to the EU. Bulgaria, along with six other Eastern European countries, will join NATO this spring and my country will join the EU in January 2007.

I am convinced that these two historic enlargements will be beneficial for the OSCE. They have the potential to further strengthen the core function of the Organization – creating a common and indivisible security space, promoting human rights and contributing to the building of democratic institutions throughout the OSCE region.

The December 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council produced a number of valuable action-oriented strategies. Our priority is to translate these commitments into practical actions.

Preventing and combating **terrorism** is a top priority for all of us.

The work of the OSCE in fighting terrorism rarely makes headlines, but that does not diminish its importance. With the practical, pragmatic approach that is so characteristic of our Organization, we have concentrated our efforts on concrete areas where we can make a real difference – airport security, policing, secure travel documents, to name but a few.

Let me give you some examples. We know that Al Qaeda and its affiliates possess shoulder-fired missiles and have used them against aircraft. Man Portable Air Defence Systems, or MANPADS, as they are known, are being sold on the black market in and around OSCE countries. Recognizing this threat, the OSCE last month held the first intergovernmental conference on this subject, bringing together experts in airport security and counter-terrorism to discuss how we can all defend ourselves against this menace.

This was not about worthy statements of intent by diplomats. It was about the practitioners, the security experts – the people at the hard end - sharing their experiences, threat assessments and best practices.

OSCE participating states are keenly aware of the need to strengthen communications between their counter-terrorism officials. But we do not just talk about it. The OSCE has launched an

internet-based network linking these officials, through which they are exchanging information. Once again, we are bringing together the practitioners.

We are strengthening our partnership with key international organizations.

Continued close interaction with the United Nations Counter Terrorism Committee is of crucial importance. In March, the OSCE will host in Vienna the third special meeting of the United Nations Counter Terrorism Committee with international, regional and sub-regional organizations.

The December 2003 Maastricht Decision on **Travel Document Security** affirmed the commitment of participating States to meet certain security standards for passports and other documents. Implementation of the decision will start with a Workshop on Travel Document Security in Vienna on 1-2 March.

This is not an abstract or theoretical discussion. It is about making it more difficult for terrorists and criminals to cross national frontiers using forged passports and ID cards.

I am proud to tell you that we in Bulgaria have some of the most secure passports in the world, offering multiple levels of protection against forgery. I am told it will take another three to five years before the European Union has passports of such technical sophistication. We are also one of the only countries which uses colour photos in visas the we issue.

The OSCE is expanding its activities in **policing**. Our Senior Police Adviser, Richard Monk, who addressed this distinguished Commission last year, has built up an impressive team of experienced police officers whose expertise is greatly in demand in our participating States – most recently in Kyrgyzstan - as they struggle to modernize their police forces. Policing is in some respects the perfect OSCE issue, bringing together security and human rights. An efficient, accountable police force that is trusted by the population it serves does not have to resort to brutality or torture to obtain information needed to solve crimes.

U.S. police officers have served with distinction in OSCE police operations and your country has been generous in funding them. I am very grateful for your continued support. But I have to mention that Mr Monk still does not have all the resources he needs to meet the demand for his team's policing expertise and I appeal to all participating States to give him the backing he deserves.

As I said, these are activities which you are unlikely to read about in your newspapers. But I am convinced that, taken together, they represent measures of real practical value in the war on terrorism which will make us all more secure.

Security clearly remains a top priority for us all but that does not mean we will neglect the **human dimension** of OSCE activities, which I know is a particular concern of this Commission.

On the contrary, it is the shared values – human and democratic - that underlie our

comprehensive approach to security that make the OSCE unique. We must never stop championing these values.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship will do its best to further advance the goal of combating anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination in the OSCE area. These phenomena continue to be a challenge for many of our societies.

At present we are preparing three important events for this year:

- a Conference on Anti-Semitism in Berlin on April 28 and 29, following up on our successful event in Vienna last year at which the U.S. delegation was ably led by former Mayor Giuliani;
- a conference in Brussels on tolerance and the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination;
- a special meeting in Paris on the relationship between racist, xenophobic and Anti-Semitic propaganda on the internet and hate crimes.

**Trafficking in Human Beings** will continue to be a focus of the Chairmanship in 2004.

The OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings provides the participating States with a comprehensive toolkit for eradicating this abominable phenomenon, which afflicts all OSCE states, whether they are countries of origin, transition or destination. The appointment of a special representative on human trafficking and the creation of a special unit in the OSCE Secretariat need to be finalized as soon as possible.

In this field, as in others, we need action, not words. But there is one key point which I would like to make. I believe too little attention is given to countries of destination. Of course, countries of origin and transit must combat the problem of human trafficking at source. But we must not forget that many of the women and young girls who fall victim to this barbarous trade end up in western cities – on the streets, in bars and night clubs, in brothels.

I would like to see a concerted and high-profile campaign by *all* OSCE participating States – east and west of Vienna – to rescue victims and punish those who abuse them. A firm and persistent police clampdown on the work of traffickers in western cities would send a clear message to these criminal gangs that their evil work will not be tolerated.

And victims should not be criminalized, as is all too often the case. They deserve our assistance and should be treated with compassion and respect.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to highlight some **regional** issues that we feel deserve particular attention.

**Georgia**, under its new leadership, is preparing for parliamentary elections next month. The

elections should reconfirm this country's path to democracy and enable a real fresh start in rebuilding and modernizing the country.

During my recent visit to Georgia, I was impressed by the remarkable work the OSCE is doing there – which includes monitoring the border with Chechnya and helping to dispose of stockpiles of ammunition from the Soviet era as well as democratic institution-building. I am sure the Organization can do even more to help the country.

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has a vital role to play in ensuring that the March 28 elections in Georgia are held in the best possible democratic conditions.

We are determined to step up efforts to solve the **Moldova** conflict. The Bulgarian Chairmanship organized a meeting of the mediators in Sofia on January 27, which reiterated support for the five-sided format and continued the discussions on the Mediators' document. The participants agreed on a blueprint for resuming the negotiations. A second mediators' meeting took place this week. We will continue to encourage the parties to find a viable and long-lasting solution of the problem.

During my visit to Moscow last week, Foreign Minister Ivanov said he would welcome a resumption of OSCE activity related to **Chechnya**. We have asked our staff to come up with proposals for projects to assist Chechnya. ODIHR will be the principal partner on behalf of the OSCE.

As Chairman-in-Office, I very much welcome the readiness of the Russian government to cooperate with the OSCE. The Chairmanship also renews its appeal to the Russian Federation to fulfil its **Istanbul Commitments**.

An important priority for the Bulgarian Chairmanship is to step up the dialogue of the OSCE with the European Union and NATO. We believe that there is a growing need to improve coordination of our work with that of the EU and NATO. Together, we represent the key institutions for security, stability and democracy in the Euro-Atlantic area. There is room to enhance further the dialogue at institutional level as well as on the ground in the field presences. In this respect, we think it would make sense if the OSCE was invited to attend the EU-US Summit in Ireland as well as the NATO Summit in Istanbul, as well as meetings of the G8. The relationship between the Russian Federation and the OSCE is also critical for the future of the Organization.

The OSCE, EU and NATO each have a dialogue of their own with the **Mediterranean** countries. Each makes a valuable contribution but the time is ripe for a new approach. We believe that an EU/NATO/ OSCE joint effort on the Mediterranean region could provide a useful framework for defining an integrated approach for enhanced cooperation in the area.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship has made **education** a key priority. We believe that education is powerful tool for achieving the goals of comprehensive security and promoting the

democratic norms and values of the OSCE.

Education and training should continue to be a pivotal element in OSCE human rights protection programs and activities. They are critical for the promotion of respect for human rights and tolerance and the creation and development of democratic institutions. Education and training are vital for empowering individuals and groups with the capacity to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner. The first Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) this year will be devoted to the topic of Human Rights Education and Training.

In conclusion, let me say that what we would like to achieve this year is the **implementation** of agreed OSCE decisions. This will be the essence of our Chairmanship.

I would like to leave with you with my own **personal vision** of the future of the OSCE. I believe our current participating States should develop a greater appreciation of the value of this unique Organization and make even more use of it in tackling the challenges we all face. I believe we should continue to re-focus our activities more towards the Caucasus and Central Asia. And I believe we should reach out more into adjacent areas, offering, in the first place, the model of comprehensive, consensus-based, cooperative security which has served the Euro-Atlantic area so well since the Helsinki Final Act. More than that, I believe we should be willing to offer our proven expertise in building democracy and promoting security to countries outside the OSCE. My personal view is that Afghanistan and Iraq deserve our support, but this will of course require consensus from all 55 participating States.

Thank you very much for your attention, I will be glad to respond to your comments or questions.